



Special Events Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

September 24, 2015

1. Review Committee Observations
2. Develop document of recommendations (Scope of Work or Deliverables) to the City regarding development of an RFP
3. Set schedule for subsequent meetings

Input from Committee members:

Cory -

1. Planning sessions with event contractor for events including brainstorming, logistics meetings, and development meetings.
2. Develop and manage events budgets with OTDB.
3. Clear definitions for use of funds regarding fees and sponsorship
 - a. Fee covers cost of contractor
 - b. Sponsorship covers the cost of the event
 - i. We know what events cost. Fundraising should be limited to cost, not profit.
4. Increased public participation and partnership – Community Organizations
 - a. Events hosted by community organization and charities similar to Harrisonburg
 - b. Give stakeholders ownership, support OTWBA events
5. Definition of specific staffing and man-hours per project
 - a. Adequate staffing and volunteers are the responsibility of contractor
6. Evaluation of contract is built into language of contract, with clauses to withhold payment.
 - a. Establishes a model for deliverables and accountability
7. More daytime events on Saturdays and Sundays; 11:00-6:00
8. Schedule city events around holidays
9. More events and marketing for retail
10. Placement restrooms must not be near restaurants or food vendors

Steve Maclin - All of the city event organizers with whom I spoke expressed several similar ideas. Each city has a clear understanding of the mission of the events and what they offer to residents and visitors. Their events and event marketing embrace their mission. Most of the successful events are the result of years of tweaking and adjustment. Private sponsorship of events is an important element in all of the cities I interviewed. This is significant as a means of supporting the events and creating stronger relationships between the cities and the local groups/businesses. None of the cities have an effective way of tracking the success of the events on the local businesses nor do they seem to care about specific metrics, other than looking at event attendance and general feedback from participants. The common goals are to bring people to the cities, create a sense of place, enhance their brand, and to create partnerships with local groups and businesses in the area.

Mark Lore - After considering our discussions and research, I have the following thoughts on how the 2011 RFP might be updated:

- The RFP should continue to provide for a Special Event Promoter (SEP) to organize certain events. This is necessary in my view in order to ensure the continuation and consistency of key signature events, e.g. KidzFest, Rockin' Independence Eve, OctoBeerfest and Holly Jolly. The SEP would continue to have responsibility for obtaining necessary business sponsorship for such city events.
- Certain other existing events might be made available to other contractors or, perhaps, sub-contractors under the general oversight of the SEP. These would include Friday Night Live and the Downtown Tailgate. Frankly, it seems to me that there may be too many of these very similar alcohol & band-fueled events, all crowded into the summer months. If someone else wants to produce them, fine, but the city might now move to focus its resources on developing a few new/different types of events which could serve other parts of the community.
- These new events that the SEP might develop could focus on ideas such as an Apple Tasting Downtown stroll, an enhanced Winchester Days or other shopping promotion and/or an additional event or two for young families, teens, etc. These would be in the current mold of free events such as the Sunday concerts, Classic Movies, Movies/Mall, KidzFest, Holly Jolly, etc. which do not generate revenues and would likely not take place without city support. As with signature events, the SEP might continue to be responsible for necessary business sponsorship of these events.
- In addition to his/her responsibility for certain key events, the SEP might function as an overall overseer of downtown events, e.g. retain and further develop certain general functions envisaged in the current contract, e.g. post-event evaluation, financial reporting, helping with a strategic event/marketing plan. The RFP might revive and strengthen the last RFP's concept of a SEP-created overall calendar of events presented

to the OTDB for approval. To help ensure appropriate standards and quality control for all events, the SEP might write a guidebook for private contractors.

- With anything like this basket of responsibilities, I would expect that the SEP's time commitment and therefore retainer would be similar to the current arrangement.

Marilyn - Very good information! I think the Charlottesville example is great and also very much appreciate your idea for the Chocolate Festival. Something like that would be perfect for downtown. Ultimately, I'd like to see the RFP be less event-driven since we have SO many others doing fantastic events downtown, and more marketing driven. The new contract could focus on: 1) Getting appropriate signage in place around Old Town 2) Advertising Old Town in Loudoun County VA, Frederick County MD and DC media 3) Getting a sign on the highway 4) Building a stronger relationship with the University who also has amazing events and should be part of our total brand 4) Getting radio spots on local media and other mechanisms for bringing people downtown and showcasing our new brand. The contractor could also be in charge of providing support for or refinement to our proven events: First Friday, Celebracion, Bluemont Concerts, Ag Day, Winchester Days, Apple Blossom, Hop Blossom, etc. I think it was great to have the City-sponsored parties downtown as we finalized our construction, but now we need to use our money in ways that will bring people downtown with or without an event taking place. We have SO MUCH to offer.

Additional Reference Information:

OTDB Vision:

To be a vibrant and inclusive Main Street community that combines small-town charm and big-city opportunity and is nationally recognized as a desirable place to work, live, and thrive.

OTDB Mission:

The OTDB inspires community involvement, fosters economic vitality, encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, and attracts residents, visitors, and investors to Old Town Winchester.

Contracted Events List:

KidzFest, Friday Night Live (June, July, August), Classic Movies (June, July, August), Taylor Concerts (June, July, August, September), RIE – July 3, Downtown Tailgate (Fri./Sat.), Octobeerfest (Fri./Sat.), and Holly Jolly